Nomination of Agency by Bangladesh for Transition of Goods

341. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

' (a) whether Government of Bangladesh had decided to nominate their own agency for transition goods from Calcutta to areas in the North East; and

(b) the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Under the provisions of the India-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit & Trade, the Competent Authority for the purpose of the Protocol from the Bangladesh side is the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC).

During the visit of the Commerce Minister of Bangladesh in May 1999, it was agreed to set up a Joint Group of Experts to consider, *inter alia,* the modalities for the movement of goods from one point in India to another through Bangladesh in pursuance of Article VIII of the India-Bangladesh Trade Agreement of 1980 and Article 12 of the Agreement of SAPTA of 1993, by Bangladesh carriers.

Issuance of Visa No. 20 by Kuwait Mission

342. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have ordered the Kuwait Mission in India to stop immediately the issuance of Visa No. 20 to Indian domestics going to Kuwait; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) and (b) The employment of Indian housemaids and male domestics in Kuwait was suspended with effect from 4th June, 1999, due to concerns relating to their working conditions. The Kuwaiti Embassy in New Delhi was formally informed of this decision and was requested not to issue visas for this category of workers.

Chinese Intrusion across the LAC

343. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the recent Kargil conflict there has been significant Chinese intrusion across the LAC into the Indian territory in the southern Ladakh region.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) government's reaction with regard thereto?